

**Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?**

The External Evaluation Performance Framework, outlined in Core Question 4, gauges if the school is providing the appropriate conditions for success. Core Question 4 consists of ten indicators designed to assess schools on curriculum and pedagogy, processes and systems for support and guidance, and climate.

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.1 Rating	The school <u>Meets Standard</u> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-Indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Curriculum aligns with state standards	
	Systematic reviews of curriculum are conducted to identify gaps based on student performance	
	Regular review of scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing	
	Sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that are prioritized and focus on core learning objectives	
	Understanding and/or consensus amongst staff as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction	
	Programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.	

The school's curriculum is aligned with standards, and school leaders stated they and teachers, using the teachers' "megabinders," conduct reviews of the curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance and ensure presentation of content in time for testing.

While it is not completely evident from all unit plans and other curriculum documents, school leaders and teachers meet to discuss the sequences of topics across grade levels and content areas and ensure that they are prioritized and focused on core learning objectives. School leaders stated that teacher teams meet to

discuss the impact of their teaching on core areas, the data collected after that teaching, and ideas for reteaching those core areas, if necessary.

Lastly, teachers have ample materials for their teaching, and they uniformly use curriculum documents and related materials to deliver their instruction. Two science teachers, for example, were observed using the same materials to deliver their lessons on glycolysis.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.2 Rating</b>	The turnaround operator is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design	
	Instruction is focused on core learning objectives	
	Pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge	
	Instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities, and learning needs	
	Sufficient feedback is provided on instructional practices	

Most lessons include appropriate standards-based objectives for the grade level of the students, and instruction is focused on meeting the objective. In most classes, the instructional activities were teacher-centered with limited differentiation strategies (usually whole-class discussion and note-taking and often teachers answering their own questions). Teachers discussed extended learning opportunities available to students, but these seemed to be mostly beyond the normal school hours. Some teachers used technology to pique students' interest (e.g., YouTube video) or to support reading comprehension (e.g., book audio recording).

There was some evidence of students working in pairs or small groups, but this was limited. For those students engaged in the assignment, most teachers offered one-on-one feedback as they circled through the students'

independent work time or through responses in the whole-class discussion. However, because the teacher worked with students or small groups individually, this left little time to meet with every student during the class period. Most Instructional Aides were not observed working with students to help them learn content.

School documentation and focus group confirmed that staff receives sufficient feedback on instructional practices through frequent informal walk-throughs and periodic formal reviews (SSOTs) performed by administration and curriculum resource teachers; however, documentation also appears to indicate that leadership is behind schedule on completing this semester's formal reviews.

4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.3. Rating</b>	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Students are prepared for rigorous post-secondary opportunities through challenging course work and rigorous job preparation programs (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study, industry certification programs)	
	High expectations exist to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities	
	Sufficient material resources and personnel guidance is available to inform students of post-secondary options	
	Opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options	
	Meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements	

Howe demonstrates a number of the elements required for successful postsecondary transitions, but it can strengthen each of these. The school offers a few AP courses (Bio, English, US History), it offers Advanced Art and does not offer Calculus—the highest math it offers is PreCalc/Trig. The school does not offer extensive and

rigorous job-preparation programs, it only offers independent study on an ad hoc basis, and it did not refer to any industry certification programs.

The counselor has rational goals for college attendance, but to have a goal of 70% attending shows that there is additional opportunity—last year, only 72% enrolled in postsecondary education, and the school believes it will have to get 90% enrolled in postsecondary training to hit that 70% goal. The school has sufficient guidance personnel available to inform students of postsecondary options, including the College Summit Program, engaged teachers, and multiple guidance counselors, but the guidance department did not appear particularly well-resourced or organized.

The school presents a variety of opportunities for extracurricular engagement—fall/winter/spring sports and clubs at the middle and high school levels. It also meets Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements, but it does not appear to offer robust course offerings to exceed them. Due to the fact that Howe exhibits moderate concerns in several areas, this school is only approaching the standard.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.4. Rating	The school <b>Meets Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Utilizes standardized and/or classroom assessments as accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives	
	Distributes assessment results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions	
	Selects assessments that have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities	
	Uses assessments with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions effectively	

Uses assessment results to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

Howe High School is beginning to develop a robust process for assessment and data use to drive meaningful and high-quality instruction. The school utilizes standardized and/or classroom assessments that are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives—such as the NWEA and Acuity benchmarking systems. The school distributes assessment results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions, in particular, the school utilizes a comprehensive sortable Excel data dashboard to make data accessible and has developed a standards-based data wall to track student progress, but they noted that they didn't implement Acuity A/B for the semester-long class and the first NWEA benchmark occurred in only mid-September.

Howe's selected assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities, and leadership highlighted the team's intent to analyze teacher-made assessments with standardized tools to ensure that assessment and grading in the classroom aligns with standards and school expectations. The school uses assessments with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions effectively; however, the calendar can be adjusted to better support school data needs.

Reviewers were able to witness a PLC meeting, during which instructional leadership used assessment results to guide instruction and make adjustments to curriculum; this process can be formalized and further strengthened to improve outcomes for Howe students. Reviewers noted that of greatest need for Howe is to build capacity around data-driven decision making and the translation into meaningful programs and instruction. Since the required elements are in place, however, the school meets the standard.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.5. Rating	The school <u>Meets Standard</u> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members	

	A sufficient number of faculty and staff are deployed to maximize instructional time and capacity
	faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned
	Professional development is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement
	Professional development opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement
	Teacher evaluation plans are explicit and regularly implemented with clear processes and criteria

The documents provided by the EMO show it has established—and the school follows—a highly organized hiring procedure that includes criteria for initial screening of candidates and at least two levels of interviews to further evaluate potential staff, including one with the principal. The principal says that the school uses standard recruitment venues such as job fairs and online and newspaper ads, and the principal says he often personally reaches out and recruits candidates using his network contacts and other personal relationships. Leadership notes that the hiring processes are organized to recruit the best candidates, but it also acknowledges the need for more seasoned faculty.

A recent staff survey shows no teacher has more than two years' experience and two-thirds are from the alternative route teacher certification programs. Mindful of this, the administrators stress they provide formal and informal professional development such as monthly teacher meetings, weekly PLC data discussions, and as-needed peer or administrator coaching. The PD topics are sometimes predetermined but mostly based on needs uncovered during formal and informal classroom observations or discovered as a result of reviews of student achievement (or pre-test) data.

Examination of the staff roster shows a deployment that appropriately reflects the needs of the school, and school leadership has brought on new staff: an attendance clerk, another dean, and Title I and Community coordinators. Most of these personnel are certified/trained in the areas to which they are assigned—often with master's degrees or enrolled in degree programs; however, of the sample (n=20) reviewed via the Indiana Educator License Lookup, 75% held valid licenses, 10% held expired licenses, and 15% were not found in the database.

Documents provided by the EMO show an explicit teacher-evaluation process with evaluation criteria, forms and procedures, scoring rubrics, and steps for teacher-performance-improvement planning. Teachers report that they receive regular feedback, although documentation provided to reviewers did not reveal meeting dates, only the observation dates.

#### 4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?

Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
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	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.6. Rating	The school <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Mission that is shared by all stakeholders	
	Stakeholders possess widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission	

In the Turnaround School Operator's Evaluation, the Thomas Carr Howe Community High School mission is depicted as follows: "Thomas Carr Howe Community High School is a multicultural community committed to empowering all students for career and college readiness so that they may become productive citizens of a global society."

This is a somewhat problematic mission in that: 1) it contains vague terminology (for example, "empowering students," "productive citizens," and "career and college readiness"), and 2) it does not offer clear guidance to decision making. This may lead to discrepancies of understanding among the in-school stakeholders. None of those asked repeated (or paraphrased) a mission that included all components (multicultural community, empowering students, college and career readiness, productive citizens, global society).

There is clear understanding of at least one component, college and career readiness; most of those interviewed said so. Preparation for a global society also was mentioned by many, but not all, interviewed. But some staff interviewed referred to components that are not specifically in the mission. For example, faculty members interviewed indicated producing "lifelong learners" or "creating a learning environment and businesslike culture," which are also components even though they are not in the published mission.

In terms of guiding their day-to-day activities, the emphasis of most conversations had to do with setting up systems, procedures, and cultural structures that will help students improve their academic performance and presumably their readiness for college and careers. Examples are data-tracking systems and a businesslike learning environment in classrooms and across the school.

Many of the interviewees stressed that the school also is striving to instill positive character traits and attitudes like confidence, self-management, and persistence. These might be seen to be components of career and college readiness and also of empowering students and becoming productive citizens, but those who mentioned them did so in the context of implementation of specific programs or procedures, not as activities guided by the mission.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.7. Rating	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Rules are clearly stated and enforce positive behavior	
	Discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior	
	Interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts	
	Interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive	

Although several meaningful discipline program elements have been implemented, due to the staff feedback regarding the lack of enforcement of the discipline policy, significant concerns raised by staff on EMO feedback surveys, and observed disrespect and unrest in classrooms and hallways, Howe is rated Approaching Standard.

The school has a published student handbook showcasing a school policy of maintaining a positive, orderly behavioral climate as a way to enable teaching and learning. It provides a rationale for the discipline code and details discipline infractions and consequences. In addition to the code of conduct, the school also has instituted a number of programs and strategies to promote positive behaviors like STRIVE, “shout outs” at monthly Town Hall meetings, and rewarding students with privileges for positive behavior.

The discipline code, as well the leader and the dean of students (VP) and his team, are clear the school expects all students to maintain a very high level of behavior and that teachers subscribe to and support the consistent management of this level of behavior. Both the EMO and the school provide training and assistance to teachers to help them manage student behavior and deal with misbehavior appropriately.



There are processes for resolving conflicts, outlined in the student handbook and further detailed by the dean of students during interviews. These processes detail the various steps for dealing with discipline issues (and who does what at each step), they include special attention to helping students and teachers understand root causes of misbehavior, and employ tactics for preventing it. However, they do not seem focused on resolution, and there is nothing in the student handbook's table of contents that identifies how conflicts are resolved or adjudicated and there is no description of a "due process" by which consequences for misbehavior can be contested.

Limited observations in hallways reveal interactions between faculty and administration and between adults and students to be respectful, professional, and, for the most part, constructive; however, classroom observations revealed some disrespectful behavior toward teachers. Teachers interviewed concurred the school has a culture of mutual respect, serious learning, and an orderly environment; despite this assertion, the EMO-administered Staff Survey shows that 62% see the discipline policy as not fair or inconsistently enforced.

Additional survey results indicate a significant percentage (more than 15%) sees administration as rigid, uncommunicative, unwilling to entertain staff input, restrictive with resources, and not promoting collaboration. Over 50% say administration is unaware of undercurrents negatively impacting student achievement; only 47% are satisfied with the school as a place to work. In a more recent limited survey (December 2013) 100% of the staff questioned said they plan to return to the school next year.

Climate is an area to carefully monitor and aggressively work to improve within Howe to ensure that the school does not recede from its current levels of turnaround.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.8. Rating	The school <b>Meets Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Communication is active and ongoing between the school and parents	
	Communications utilized are both timely and relevant to parental concerns	

	Communication of student academic progress and achievement is reported in a manner understood by parents
	Communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

For this section of the report, Howe has met the standard. The school has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents, with teachers calling and e-mailing the parents of students each week. Site visit team members also observed parents in the school talking with teachers.

School leaders and teachers at Howe ensure that their communications to parents are timely and relevant; several parents, for example, stated that teachers call parents directly from their classrooms, about a student in that specific classroom, when there is a break in the lesson. The school also communicates student academic progress in appropriate reports for parents, such as the weekly updates that parents get about their children.

Lastly, the school's communication methods meet the needs of a diverse set of parents; for example, site visit team members learned that there are a variety of meetings and gatherings for parents, in different venues and at different times, to better fit with the work schedules of parents.

4.9. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	Less than 70% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
	Approaching standard	More than 70% but less than 80% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
	Meets standard	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
	Exceeds standard	At least 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
4.9. Rating	The school <b><u>Not Evaluated</u></b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	

In the end-of-year survey given to parents in the spring of 2013, 52.2% of parents surveyed (N=23) agreed with the statement, "My child is happy at [the] school." During focus groups in November 2013, parents were

overwhelmingly positive about the school; however, reviewers were not able to talk to families of students with special needs. More information is required to adequately judge the performance of this school.

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in the sub-indicators below
	Approaching standard	The school is <u>not yet completely</u> fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement in the sub-indicators below
	Meets standard	The school <u>is fulfilling</u> its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below
4.10. Rating	The school <u>Meets Standard</u> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation	
	Research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services	
	Relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation	

Thomas Carr (Howe) High School is fulfilling its legal obligation regarding ESL students, based on review without file audit. The ESL staff demonstrates a clear understanding of current ESL legislation by identifying ESL students using the home language survey and placing ESL students using results from a placement test or the LAS Links assessment. ESL students are assessed annually to measure growth in language acquisition, and changes in placement are made when necessary.

The ESL staff demonstrates understanding of effective practices related to ESL services by providing accommodations and modifications within the general education classroom and language-specific instruction in a pull-out setting. Pull-out instruction extends beyond translation and covers content from the core subjects as well general academic vocabulary. ESL staff has established positive teacher-parent relationships. Teachers communicate with parents regularly and provide school-related information to parents in their native language.